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Job Outlook Brightens

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Area corporations are seeking executive and middle-management personnel more actively now than at any time during the past two years, local employment and executive search agencies report.

The greatest number of job openings in recent months has been in the middle-income bracket—from \$10,000 to \$15,000 a year, an informal survey of agencies revealed, but there also are increasing numbers of openings in high-income jobs.

Management Recruiters, Inc. in Falls Church, reported a "tremendous upswing" in middle income jobs in retailing, construction, sales and accounting, but another firm, which deals only in executive jobs, said that "things are getting better here but only selectively—in fields where increased government spending, is a factor."

Don Wallach of Wallach Associates, Inc. said his executive search firm the past four months has arranged about two and a half times the number of interviews as during the same period a year ago.

He said the number of interviews arranged now averages about 150 a month, compared with a low of 41 during December 1970. Prior to recent months, Wallach said, his job-interview figures had been on the decline since May 1969, when they numbered 350.

The Labor Department's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate began to rise in 1969, when it was 3.5 percent. Last summer it reached a peak of 6.1 percent. Last month it had slipped back to 5.7 percent.

Despite high unemployment at all income levels, corporations are finding it difficult to recruit executive personnel because they are reluctant to hire people who were laid off their last jobs, Wallach said.

Security Problem

At the same time, Wallach and others said, many executives or potential executives are reluctant to leave their present firms, even for higher-paying jobs, because they feel a new position would be less secure.

James Anthony, manager of Management Recruiters, said that his firm's revenues, which are paid only by companies when they hire personnel from MR's files, are up about 30 percent from last year.

"We can place almost anyone with a couple years of college and a year or two of job experience," Anthony said. His firm now fills about 75 jobs a month.

The bulk of the jobs that MR finds for its clients are administrative jobs (paying \$12,000-\$18,000 a year); construction supervisory jobs (\$14,000-\$18,000); sales positions (\$10,000-\$15,000); and clerical jobs primarily for women (\$6,200-\$8,000).

Training Expense

Anthony said that companies are increasingly reluctant to hire new college graduates without job experience because of training expenses. "They are beginning to find that a man with only a year or two of college and a year or two of experience is just as good or better than a college graduate, who won't start for less than \$10,000 or \$12,000," he said.

Another result of the trend, he noted, is companies are doing less advertising for personnel and more active recruiting through agencies.

Norman Rosenberg of Dunhill of Washington D.C., Inc. said that his firm also has experienced a job demands upswing in recent months, but said positions for engineers still lag conspicuously.

Rosenberg said his firm is placing most of its job applicants in sales or administrative positions paying \$11,000 to \$14,000, but he also said "It's the second- or third-job man they're after. Most college grads and veterans unfortunately are still getting turned down."

Other employment agencies specializing in Washington's largest labor market—secretaries and office assistants—said jobs are opening rapidly, but there are few people to fill them. "Maybe it's because girls are scared and are hanging on to their old jobs, or maybe it's because fewer of them are coming into Washington nowadays," said Nancy Walters of Executive Staffing, Inc. "We'd love to know why because we need them."